



"Enriching Lives"

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN**  
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration / 500 W. Temple Street / Los Angeles, CA 90012  
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***Celebrating our 30th Anniversary***

May 31, 2005

The Honorable Board of Supervisors  
County of Los Angeles  
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**SUPPORT ASSEMBLY BILL 22 (AB22) (LIEBER, LIU), CONCERNING HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:**

1. Support AB22 (Lieber, Liu), a comprehensive anti-trafficking bill designed to protect victims, prosecute traffickers, and prevent human trafficking in California;
2. Instruct the Executive Officer of the Board to send a five-signature letter to Governor Schwarzenegger, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, Speaker of the Assembly, the Senate and Assembly minority leaders, and the Los Angeles County Legislative delegation expressing the Board's support of AB 22.

**PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION**

AB defines and provides strong deterrents to the crime of human trafficking, which involves the recruitment, transportation, or sale of persons for forced labor. Through the use of violence, threats or coercion, enslaved persons may be forced into prostitution, forced labor, and other involuntary service.

Existing law establishes the offenses of slavery and involuntary servitude. In addition, existing law makes it an offense to entice an unmarried female minor for purposes of prostitution, as specified, or to aid or assist with the same, or to procure by fraudulent means, any female to have illicit carnal connection with any man. Existing law also makes it a crime to take away any minor as specified, for purposes of prostitution.

This bill would include the existing crimes of slavery and involuntary servitude within new provisions pertaining to human trafficking. It would also establish the crime of trafficking of a person for forced labor or services and the crime of trafficking of a minor

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for sexual servitude, both punishable as felonies. Furthermore, AB 22 would provide various sentencing enhancements for these offenses.

The Commission recommends supporting this bill because it offers protection for victims by making these activities felonies and increasing prison terms. As a commission representing women in the County, we are concerned that human trafficking brutally exploits vulnerable immigrant women and children, forcing them into prostitution and involuntary service in order to earn profits for their traffickers. These offenses grossly violate the core values of the Commission – protecting the safety and well-being of women and children. We support this bill because it increases prison terms if human trafficking involves physical violence such as bodily injury to the victim, kidnapping or sexual abuse.

We also recommend this bill because it strengthens government enforcement and prosecution of this brutal crime. The bill would require state and local law enforcement authorities to issue a Law Enforcement Authority Endorsement (LEA) within 15 business days of initial contact with the victim. In addition, AB 22 would require the Attorney General to give priority to matters involving human trafficking.

#### Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The recommended action is consistent with the County's strategic plan goals of Children and Families' Well-Being, Community Services, Health and Mental Health, and Public Safety.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING**

The bill requires law enforcement to issue a Law Enforcement Authority Endorsement (LEA) for all trafficking victims. This LEA is necessary for victims to access services provided by the federal government, including immigration relief, thereby removing much of the burden of service provision from the state and the County. The recommended action would therefore save the County most of the social services costs by accessing federal funds instead to support victims.

#### **FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

Human trafficking is a well-documented and widely publicized international, domestic and local problem. The following statistics illustrate the magnitude of this problem:

- In 2003 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimated that 800,000 to 900,000 people are trafficked across international borders each year.
- Seventy percent of these individuals are female and fifty percent are children.
- In June 2004, the U.S. State Department reported that 14,500 to 17,500 people are trafficked annually into the United States.
- International trafficking victims come predominately from Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe.
- In December 2004 there were 16 cases of human trafficking under investigation

in the City of Los Angeles, of which roughly 50% are sex trafficking cases.

In addition, *The City of Los Angeles Human Trafficking and Child Prostitution Task Force Report* reports the following recent cases of human trafficking in Southern California:

- In 2004, local law enforcement raided a brothel in South Los Angeles where more than 12 trafficked women were being housed as indentured servants. In July of 2004, the brothel owner pleaded guilty on 28 different counts relating to the cases, including recruiting, importing and harboring immigrants.
- In Los Angeles, two Thai women were held against their wills for more than five years by a Thai restaurant owner. The owner forced them to work 18 hours a day, 7 days a week between a Woodland Hills home and a restaurant.
- A Rancho Palos Verdes businessman held an Indonesian woman captive in a home and raped her repeatedly until she was able to escape.

State officials and women's organizations throughout Los Angeles County strongly support AB 22 as effective legislation to combat human trafficking. On February 25, 2005 Assembly Member Sally Lieber, State Senator Sheila Kuehl and other legislators advocated passage of the bill at a public hearing at UCLA. Organizations in support of the bill include the California Alliance for Consumer Protection, the California Commission on the Status of Women, the Crowley's Children's Fund and the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael.

Attached is the *City of Los Angeles Human Trafficking and Child Prostitution Task Force Report*, which includes letters about the issue from Los Angeles Mayor James Hahn and Los Angeles City Councilmember Tony Cardenas. Also attached is the Chief Administrative Office's summary of AB 22.

#### **IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)**

The recommended action is designed to safeguard and protect the health, welfare and safety of the public.

Respectfully submitted,

KARIN DAVALOS  
President

RUTH JERNIGAN  
Legislative Committee Chair

c: Chief Administrative Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer

Attachments